


Congratulations! You've Graduated From HIGH SCHOOL Now What?



In a recent survey, less than 33 percent of American employers believed that high school graduates were prepared to hold jobs in their businesses. Today, people who do not get education beyond high school (unskilled workers) will find it hard to get a job that pays more than minimum wage and will find it difficult to purchase a home or a car, much less save money.

Unskilled workers earn less today because of changes caused by the global economy and the changing technology in the workplace. What does that mean? Changes in the global economy refer to the fact that you are not just competing with someone in your own town for a job, but with everyone in the state, the country, as well as the world. If

you do not have the skills required for a specific job, someone else will. In addition, you may have the skills to do certain jobs, such as sewing clothes, but so do many people in Taiwan, Singapore or Mexico who may be willing to work for less pay.

Unskilled workers either work for very little money or are not employed at all. At the same time, many professional and technical workers are earning higher pay for their work. These workers have skills that are required for jobs in the new economy. The difference in education and training allows skilled workers to earn larger paychecks than unskilled workers. Even though there are a lot of college graduates, their salaries are higher compared to people with only a high school education.

Today, higher education skills

are desired and rewarded by employers. These higher level skills are needed by today's worker in order to keep up with an economy that is constantly creating new technologies.

On the other side, today's high school graduates looking for a job will earn about 27 percent less than high school graduates a decade ago. In other words, if a high school graduate earned \$980 a month ten years ago, today a graduate would only make \$715 a month.

Today's technological world requires higher levels of math, reading, science, computer applications, problem solving, and communication skills than ever before.

Examples of evolving technology include portable computers, cellular phones, and microchip manufacturing. All these products have to be designed, produced, and

repaired. Every year better, faster, smaller models of these products are introduced. If workers cannot adjust to fast changes because they can't read instructions then they'll be replaced by someone who can.

However, this doesn't mean that the only way to make a living in today's work world is with a four-year degree. Employees with two-year technical degrees and one-year occupational certificates are in high demand. In addition, if you are motivated to achieve excellence, you will be in a good position to get a good job.

An individual can be one of these high skill, high pay workers by planning ahead. High school students should take advanced math and science courses when possible. If your school is involved in tech-prep programs with a two-year college, see if these programs fit your interests and abilities. The choices you make today will shape your future tomorrow. ♦

Source: *Texas Career Success*

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